

STOREFRONT FOR ART AND ARCHITECTURE

Armin Linke
An uneven exchange of power

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Storefront for Art and Architecture
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For over a decade, Milan-based photographer and filmmaker Armin Linke has built an archive of images about human activity and the most varied natural and man-made landscapes. This archive consists of a series of atlases that simultaneously capture intimate local situations and radical large-scale transformations the world over. His work is both political and poetic: political in his constant reference to social and ideological constructions of space, and poetic in his use of performance, the practice of everyday life, and his invocation of the utopian imagination. Linke documents scenes where the boundary between fiction and non-fiction blurs or becomes invisible.

An uneven exchange of power, curated by Anselm Franke, presents a selection of over 200 images from Linke's archive, shown in large format books organized in categories that correspond to the organization of the archive, such as *landscape architecture*, *performance*, *interior*, and *fashion*, among others. The images often redefine the categories: in *landscape architecture* we find Soviet-style abandoned discotheque, Samarcand, Uzbekistan, 2001; in *performance*, *The Synagogue*, *Church of All Nations*, TV show, Lagos, Nigeria, 2000; and in *interior*, *Star City ZPK*, pressurized trousers, Moscow, Russia, 1998. The photos introduce a different understanding of the present by subverting the prevalent visual regimes produced by the media, tourism, the military and other special interest groups. Similarly, in the two videos included in the exhibition, *Baghdad, 24.04.2002*, 2002, and *Gaza City, Road Block at Netsareim Settlement Beach Road*, 2003, Linke depicts the unexpected banality of everyday activities in unstable political environments.

Linke's archive is also viewable online, through the *Book on Demand* project, first presented at Utopia Station, at www.arminlinke.com. In addition to the categories above, the archive is searchable by key words and nearly 400 different 'places'.

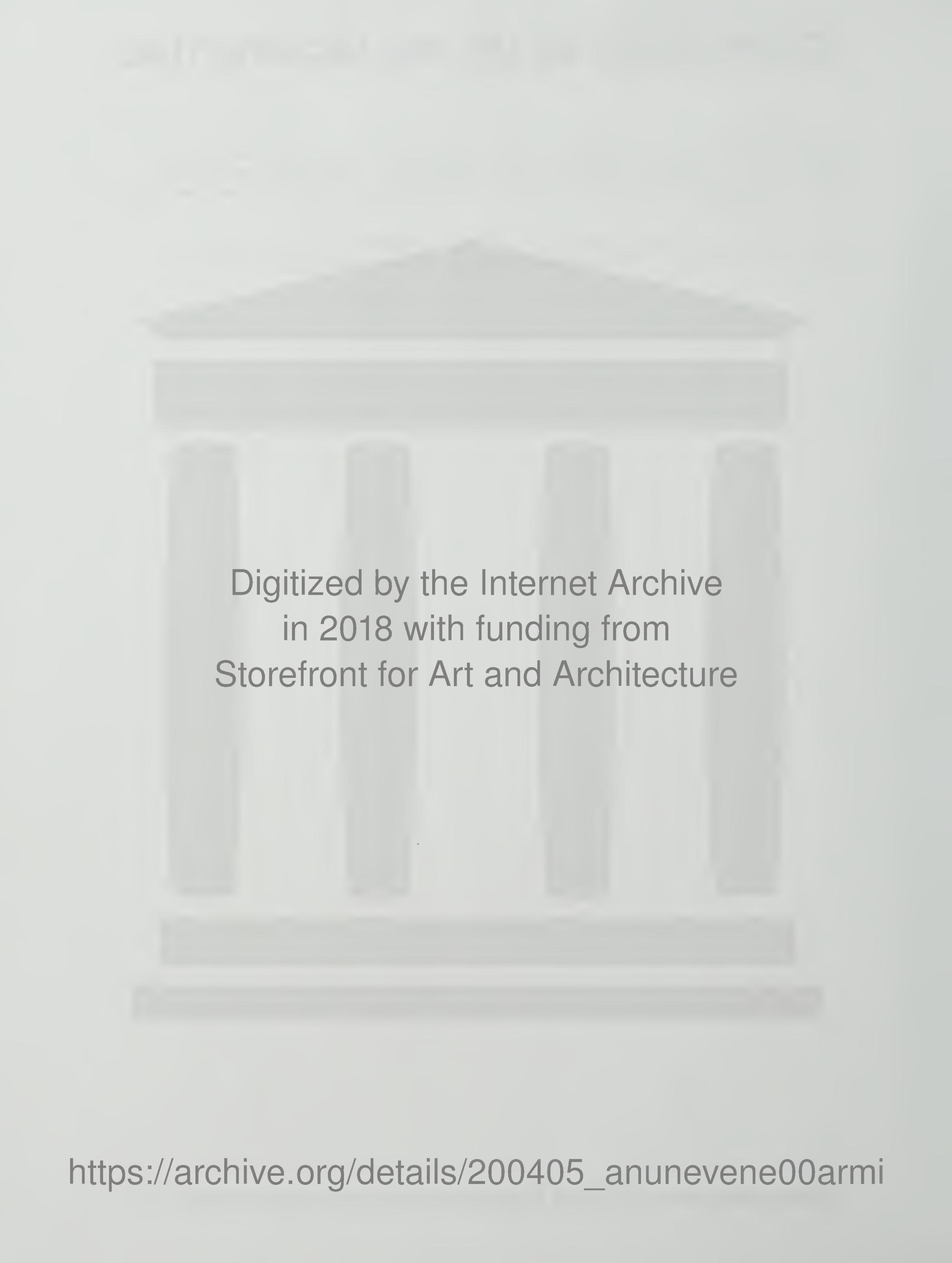
The recent publication: *Armin Linke: Transient*, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Stefano Boeri, (Skira, 2003) is also available at the gallery.

Armin Linke (1966) lives in Milan. Selected solo exhibitions include: *Galerie Klosterfelde*, Berlin (2003); *Muro temporaneo*, Studio Massimo De Carlo, Milano (2001) and *Instant Book*, Deitch Projects, New York (1996). Selected group exhibitions include: *.Scapes*, Haus der Kunst, Merano (2004); *Utopia Station*, Venice Biennale, 50th International Art Exhibition (2003); *Territories*, KW Berlin (2003); *25th Bienal di Sao Paulo*, (2002); *Venice Biennale*, 7th International Architecture Exhibition (2000); *Voila, Le monde dans la tete*, Musee d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (2000); and *Cities on the Move* (1998-1999).

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Anselm Franke is an independent curator based in Berlin. The exhibition *Territories*, curated by Franke with Eyal Weizman, Rafi Segal and Stefano Boeri, originally presented at KW Berlin, will open this month at the Malmö Konsthall, Sweden.

Armin Linke: An uneven exchange of power, is sponsored in part by Graphistudio, Milan; Galerie Klosterfelde, Berlin and Galleria Marabini, Bologna.



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https://archive.org/details/200405_anunevene00armi

From: Anselm Franke <<mailto:anselmfranke@mail.com>>
To: Robert Thill <<mailto:rthill@pratt.edu>>
Cc: armin <<mailto:armin@arminlinke.com>>
Sent: Sunday, June 20, 2004 12:51 PM
Subject: Re:

Robert,
thanks for the text, which I really like. its already quite a dense
textual fabric
so I don't know if I can help you much, but will try answering your
questions as good as I can.

Sth general: Linke's work has always fascinated me
in many respects, but one effect of this work on me is standing
apart from the many other reasons:
they produce a certain silence. They don't produce more meaning,
more "text", more positionings,
but rather put an end to "text" (=identity) and meanings by replacing
it through a language
of the visual. This is why Linkes's work always produces more of a
questionmark and is never an illustration.
This is extraordinary since Linke's subject is clearly the
documentary, his artistic
and aesthetic language always stands *behind* the mere reality of
the motif. Just as in the news
(and as reflected as well in his titles) place, time and circumstance
of his pictures *do* matter, but unlike
them, they are not gaining their significance from contextualisation,
voiceover, caption and political
instrumentalisation, but rather show us how much this machine of
mass media image production
rely on exactly those instruments and thus structures political
meanings and perception. Maybe this is why he's so fascinated by
Science Fiction.

In re. to the title of the show, its been just attempt to formulate this
quality of his work to pose questions, which is
"where are you?" just as much as "who are you?", "whats your
potential?" - the photographer, the viewer, the human and the a-
human eye,
the eye as a concept.

More down to earth, this is reflected in the juxtaposition of the
vertical/horizontal structure you refer to.
The "an uneven exchange" starts with the encounter of different
dimensions, the experience of "sth. is bigger than you", which can

be as well an expression for a very undemocratic reality, but educational, enlightning, too, and finally, of course, sth. spiritual - reading modernity and hypermodernity as a spiritual vs. and ideological cultural project.

But, together with the reference to the Arab world and US politics (the NYC reference), the title is as well ment to adress another issue which I see in very much represented in his work and which I found very relevant:

Geo-politics as carried out by mainly the US is been built upon the aerial perspective, abstract and distanced intelligence, as opposed to the horizontal encounter, the micro-geography of the Everyday. And as Linke's images are all about simultaneity and the clashes, coexistence and exploitation of parallel worlds and realities (not like many others I never thought his works would speak about hybridity, but of course about different modernities), they are at the same hand never "aerial". I have been looking at educational material of the military on urban warfare recently, and here you find the whole problem of imperial politics today: being able to do almost everything (in terms of having the power), but this everything will be sth carried out from distance, within and from a superimposed virtual reality, with the "facts" coming from the sky, while getting into serious problems at the street level, the level of the social fabric, or in military terms the "local knowlegde". Thats an uneven exchange where you do not know yet and probably you'll never know whose got the power and who is going to define reality in the near future. Linke's images are somehow even apocalyptic, as they could be understood as a an evidenc yet to come for the limits of western modernity and power: Scenarios where Empires would loose their ability to assimilate, and suddenly the hermetic, physical border (which has been proved to be the weakest means of politics ever) is the only way to keep the status quo of today's uneven power relations.

Almost likely to be compared to archeology, to the process of deciphering, Linke looks at moments where these conflicts are being manifested, where they are being turned into questions of mass-concepts. You'll hardly ever see a true take on the individual in his work. Its always somehow "beyond" the individual, where social reality is being formed by exceeding a critical mass, of whatever specification and quality, but most certainly and "imagined" one.

One could be saying that these two, the artistic and the political take have been forming the conceptual background of the show.

Just wrote this "on the fly" and hope you can use some bits of it and

find it useful.

Let me know

all best

Anselm

ps.: Armin, do you disagree with any of this?

